





SECRETARY'S REVIEW

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INTRODUCTION

I am pleased to present the Secretary's Review.

The 2016–17 financial year saw the Department of Parliamentary Services (DPS) focus on strengthening a culture of accountability, developing innovative thinking, maintaining stability and improving individual and collective performances. Reflecting on my second year in the role, I am profoundly appreciative of the entire DPS team for their enormous contribution and resilience as we strive to provide high quality, connected services, to the Parliament, parliamentarians, visitors and the broader community.

Following the launch of the 2016–17 DPS Corporate Plan in August 2016, our department has focussed on delivering our strategic themes and objectives that support the functions of Parliament and the work of parliamentarians with professional services, advice and facilities. These I point out further in my review as we have achieved many significant milestones and are working tirelessly to address minor set-backs.

I thank the Presiding Officers, the President of the Senate the Hon Stephen Parry and the Speaker of the House of Representatives the Hon Tony Smith MP for their continued support of me and of DPS over the past year. I also thank the heads of the parliamentary departments – the Clerk of the Senate, Richard Pye, retired Clerk of the Senate, Dr Rosemary Laing, the Clerk of the House of Representatives, Mr David Elder, and the Parliamentary Budget Officer, Mr Phil Bowen PSM FCPA – for their continued goodwill and collegiality as we seek together to better serve the Parliament and parliamentarians. This collegiality was on display during the official opening and early months of the 45th Parliament, with the parliamentary service working seamlessly to support new and returning senators and members with information and practical support. The double dissolution election resulted in 49 parliamentarians taking their seats in Parliament for the first time—a significant cohort of new senators and members requiring the wrap-around support of the parliamentary service. In addition there were four parliamentarians elected who had served previously. Also during the year our four departments launched the first Strategic Plan for the parliamentary administration. This plan adds a formal dimension to the collaborative engagement which now characterises the work of the parliamentary service. I am encouraged by the progress DPS has made in engaging proactively with the parliamentary departments as partners who collectively support the institution of Parliament.

ACHIEVEMENTS

In 2016–17 DPS implemented a variety of reforms and innovations to allow us to better support our clients, stakeholders and customers, including restructuring our organisation to increase focus on stewardship of the building and implementation of the capital works program. As a result we improved our performance against the Corporate Plan's Program 2 performance criteria, achieving three out of four measures, while continuing to maintain performance levels against Program 1.

We continue to develop our ability to report meaningfully against our Corporate Plan's Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). To demonstrate this, I present some specific achievements, grouped according to the strategic themes and objectives articulated in our Corporate Plan.

Respond to the changing needs of the Parliament (Strategic Theme 1)

Objective: Implement efficient and effective infrastructure, systems and services to respond to the changing needs of the Parliament and our parliamentarians.

- From 1 January 2017 we brought a substantial catering and event management service in-house, at the expiry of the contract with the previous out-sourced provider. The main rationale for the change was to deliver greater control over value, quality and venue use. Similar in-house operations are in place in a number of state parliaments. Our aim has been to improve the value and quality of food and beverage services to building occupants and visitors. The in-house model which we have branded APH Catering and Events allows us to respond quickly to feedback and respond flexibly to the needs of a working parliament, with dramatic peaks in demand and extended trading hours during busy periods such as Budget Week, and quieter periods when parliament is not sitting.
- We have made significant progress in delivering on the security upgrade implementation plan, enhancing internal and external security arrangements to meet current requirements and provide scalability for a future heightened security threat environment.

Objective: Explore and develop innovative technology and systems for the delivery of timely information and services to parliamentarians.

- In May 2017, we launched the ParlWork web application, giving instant access to live chamber business information via mobile devices.
- We installed new video conferencing facilities to make parliamentary business more accessible to Australians living in regional and remote areas.

Objective: Retain the Parliamentary Library's position as our clients' preferred and trusted source of high quality information, analysis and advice.

- The Library has increased the percentage of its collection available in digital form from 15 per cent at the end of June 2006 to 42.2 per cent at the end of June 2017. Some 88 per cent of serials and almost 30 per cent of monograph titles are now available in full text on-line; and around 70 per cent of the collection budget was spent on electronic resources (including news services).

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- The Library published a range of topical research products, notably its *Briefing Book: key issues for the 45th Parliament*, a volume of strategic snapshots of some of the key public policy issues that were expected to figure in the Parliament's first months that also showcase the specialist expertise of our researchers.

Develop our capability to promote strong stewardship and robust organisational resilience (Strategic Theme 2)

Objective: Continue to develop staff with the skills and capabilities to be responsive and solutions-oriented in supporting Parliament.

- We continued to implement the Learning and Development (L&D) Framework, as we recognise our people are our most valuable resource and we are committed to the ongoing development of their skills, knowledge and behaviours to meet the objectives of the department.
- After a successful pilot program we implemented the Parliamentary Executive Level (PEL) 1 Development Program in February 2017 to provide DPS managers with a solid understanding of the fundamentals of management practice and equip them with leadership skills they can exercise on the job.

Objective: Examine cost effective and innovative ways to deliver our services.

- Through a cost-effective social media marketing strategy, we delivered the most popular Autumn Garden Tour program to date (93 per cent of tickets sold) and achieved a cost neutral result.
- We implemented innovative soil moisture salinity and temperature monitoring tools ('POGO') as part of our landscape management tools. We are one of few sites in the ACT trialling this innovative technology to reduce our maintenance costs and improve predictive capabilities for maintaining our 23 hectares of landscaped gardens (including 10 hectares of turf).

Objective: Build strong financial, business and project management capability across DPS.

- Each DPS branch implemented a business plan to set out how it will contribute to the achievement of the objectives of the DPS Corporate Plan 2016–17. These plans detail branch priorities and deliverable timeframes.
- To ensure the preservation of digital assets for future generations, we purchased a new Digital Asset Management System (DAMS). After it has been implemented licences for the system will allow us to manage and preserve digital assets, including photographs that document parliamentary activity and have a high cultural, economic or historical value.

Objective: Maintain a strong governance framework for all DPS operations.

- We produced the DPS Governance Framework in August 2016, providing a structure and set of rules that outlines how DPS is managed and controlled. Good governance supports DPS to achieve outcomes in an open and transparent manner.

- In March 2017, the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) champions prepared new Protocols for Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country, following advice from the Parliamentary Service Indigenous Advisory Group. These protocols are an initiative under the Parliamentary Service Reconciliation Action Plan 2016–18.

Enhancing the Parliament's engagement with the community (Strategic Theme 3)

Objective: Enhance our visitor experience and community engagement including the use of social media and emerging technologies.

- We delivered a number of events and exhibitions including the Gifts from the Parliament House Art Collection and Prevailing Voices – Indigenous Australian Parliamentarians exhibitions. We also produced our annual spring and autumn tours and Enlighten program of activities.
- APH was voted ninth in the 2017 TripAdvisor Travellers' Choice for Australia's top 10 landmarks for the second year in a row.

Objective: Enhance electronic access to parliamentary information for the community to engage easily with the parliamentary process.

- We refreshed the APH website to make it easier for the public to engage with the work of the Parliament. We increased smart technology compatibility (making it easier to view on all mobile devices) and designed a new homepage layout and improved website navigation.
- In August 2016, we orchestrated live streaming of parliamentary proceedings for members of the public. Our Online Video Platform allows proceedings to be accessed live from any device and any operating system, making this one of the most advanced and comprehensive parliamentary streaming services in the world. In combination with the website changes, these enhancements helped drive visitation to the APH website from 4.7 million to 5.2 million.

Effective stewardship of APH (Strategic Theme 4)

Objective: Ensure adaptations of the building uses are strategic, appropriate and reference design integrity principles.

- We formed a new Design Integrity & Archives Unit in July 2016, to coordinate consultation on matters that have the potential to impact on the design integrity of APH.
- In July 2016, we also recommenced work on the Central Reference Document (CRD). When completed this will form an enduring single source of truth for the design integrity of APH. We hosted presentations about the design intent of the architects, to improve the knowledge and understanding of parliamentary employees regarding the design intent of the building.

Objective: Ensure a secure environment while maintaining public accessibility.

- In June 2017, we commenced a program of works to the perimeter of APH to enhance the security of building occupants and the hundreds of thousands of visitors to APH each year.
- We are upgrading our Emergency Warning and Intercommunication System to improve the reliability and emergency evacuation capability of Parliament House.

Objective: Effectively manage a capital works program for APH to function effectively as a safe and accessible workplace.

- We are upgrading the central water chilling plant within APH which is anticipated to use approximately 22 per cent less energy, with associated energy cost savings. The work also demonstrates DPS' commitment to the Australian Government's goal of eliminating the use of R22 refrigerant, which contributes to ozone depletion.
- We have commenced a project to improve accessibility, lighting and visitor signage in our public carpark.

Objective: Effectively manage all assets within APH including collections.

- We are digitising the Parliament House Art Collection, including full audit, condition check and radio-frequency identification (RFID) tagging to preserve collections for future generations.
- After a third-party review of methodologies used to assess the condition of our critical engineering systems we adopted a new ranking system that takes into account physical condition, operating condition, obsolescence and residual life, and set new condition targets. Due to the fact that much equipment is reaching the end of its life, and the long lead times and project timeframes for scheduled capital works replacements, our results for 2016–17 did not meet our new targets by a significant margin. Performance is expected to improve as programmed capital works progress to completion.
- Following recommendations from an internal audit, the Landscape Condition Rating methodology used in 2015–16 was reviewed and a new methodology adopted which gives a better and fairer representation of overall landscape condition. This resulted in us exceeding our target for the percentage of landscaped areas reviewed that were rated as being in a 'good' or better condition in 2016–17.

CHANGING DIRECTION

In the 2015–16 Annual Report, I noted my intent to expedite the finalisation of the Conservation Management Plan (CMP) and Design Principles (DP) documents.

Both projects were well advanced when I joined DPS in December 2015, having been commissioned in 2012 by my predecessor.

Unfortunately, as I noted in my evidence to the Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee in February 2017¹ the department's original brief was flawed, due mainly to a failure to consult adequately with Mr Romaldo Giurgola, principal architect of Parliament House, or his nominated representatives, Ms Pamille Berg AO, Hon FRAIA and Mr Hal Guida LFRAIA AIA. There was a similar failure to consult with Mr Giurgola's representatives during the development of the CMP. As a result, when I sought their views on the draft documents, in February 2016, they identified significant errors and anomalies, particularly in the CMP. When the consultants developing the CMP declined to address these substantive issues, the projects were terminated by mutual consent in September 2016. This was not a decision I took lightly, given the amount of Commonwealth funding already expended on these projects. However, we are exploring the possibility of repurposing the DP document into a more general publication on Mr Giurgola's thoughts on design. The draft CMP is not 'fit for purpose' and cannot be made so without a substantial further investment of time and funding. I advised the Presiding Officers of my intentions in August 2016.

This experience strengthened my conviction of the importance of completing the Central Reference Document (CRD) as a timeless, permanent record of the Architect's design intent prepared by a member of the original design team for the building. When completed, the CRD will be a single source of truth and will clearly outline the original design brief requirements for the Parliament and the architect's response. It will also provide a strong, permanent foundation for a detailed design integrity framework and the development of appropriate management plans in the future. I am grateful to Ms Berg and Mr Guida for having the faith to re-engage with us and for sharing their tremendous depth of knowledge and experience with the design, construction and fit-out of APH. I am confident that the value of our collaborative efforts will serve the Parliament for generations to come.

1 Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee, Estimates, Monday 27 February 2017, pp. 49–50

WORK THAT BUILDS ON 2016–17

In 2017–18, the department will continue to strive for excellence in supporting the functions of Parliament and the work of parliamentarians, through the provision of professional services, advice and facilities. We will continue to enhance our security arrangements to ensure APH occupants and visitors are as safe as possible and implement the 2017–18 DPS Corporate Plan to deliver the following outcomes:

Respond to the changing needs of the Parliament

- Leverage modern cloud based technologies to enable parliamentarians and mobile workers to use notebook computers anywhere and anytime whether computers operate Windows or MacOS.
- Provision of Parliamentary Library Services, enhancing digital access and ensuring high and consistent quality in services.

Enhance the Parliament's engagement with the community

- Deliver a variety of activities including events, exhibitions and tours to celebrate the 30th anniversary of APH and increase visitor attendance.
- Leverage social media platforms to increase public awareness and understanding of the work of APH, and encourage more virtual visitor interactions through the APH website.

Effective stewardship of APH

- Continue to progress work on the Central Reference Document (CRD), as a comprehensive account of the architect's design intent for APH and its landscape, and commence development of a management plan to guide our staff in the appropriate management of change for APH.
- Implement the findings of a functional review of APH security, which will benchmark our security against the parliaments of the United Kingdom, Canada and United States.

Effective delivery of the Parliament House Works Program

- Upgrade lifts, electrical, heating, cooling and ventilation infrastructure and replace emergency generators that have reached the end of their serviceable life.
- Progress the lake water extraction project, to extract up to 115ML of water annually from Lake Burley Griffin to irrigate the parliamentary gardens.

